

REMARKS

The claims have been revised so that there is an amended primary independent claim 65 from which the rest of the claims depend either directly or indirectly; with one exception. That exception is independent claim 64 which was previously indicated as allowable.

Claim 65 calls for the distal end and the proximal end of the linear engagement member being embedded in the sidewall of the tube or companion member.

This limitation structurally distinguishes over the references shown. Equally importantly, it distinguishes in a fashion that goes to the functionality of the distinctions between Applicants' invention and the references cited. The cited references teach the use of a guide wire or of a rail on which elements associated with catheters are inserted and positioned.

For example, the guide wire 10 in the Millar '358 patent is a rail on which multiple pressure sensors are threaded or passed down this guide wire and positioned in the region of interest (see col. 2, lines 13-20). This sliding reception and positioning is referred to at col. 4, line 33. Certain of the devices 11 that are positioned on the guide wire 10 can be removed and replaced (see col. 9, lines 6-15).

In the FIG. 8 embodiment, the catheters are inserted over the guide wire 10 and, as indicated in column 13, lines 28-32, these catheters 130, 140 can be removed by being pulled out of the patient along the guide wire 10.

The FIG. 14 and 15 embodiment contemplates that when devices are positioned, the guide wire 10 can be withdrawn and the guide wire passageway is used for other purposes.

The Callol et al. '628 patent also shows the use of guide wires 310, 312 (see FIGs. 35-39). A catheter is advanced and positioned over the guide wire. See col. 30, line 57

through column 33, line 9 and in particular col. 31, lines 15-22. The important point is that the Rx guide wire 310, for example, is used to load the catheter assembly onto this Rx guide wire 310 for advancement to the target site (col. 31, lines 15-22).

The guide wires of the references are guide wires. They are wires over which various elements and devices are advanced and positioned and in some embodiments, removed. They operate as a rail.

By significant contrast, Applicants' design employs a linear engagement member, which can be a wire, but which is not a guide wire. Applicants' linear engagement member 26, 36, 46, etc. is fixed within the catheter assembly being inserted into the patient and remains within that assembly during operation of that assembly. This linear engagement member is removed only when the two major elements of this catheter assembly are to be separated from one another and individually removed.

The fact that the linear engagement member of Applicants is not a guide wire or a rail is why the proximal distal ends of this linear engagement member are embedded within the sidewall of one or the other of the two main catheter elements. This relationship is now specified in the new independent claim 66, from which all but one of the other claims depend directly or indirectly. Applicants' linear engagement member is in no sense a guide wire.

When Applicants' catheter assembly is to be removed from the patient, the proximal end of one of the two main elements 20, 22 of the assembly is cut off so that access can be had to the linear engagement member. The linear engagement member is then pulled out thereby disengaging the two main elements 20, 22 of this assembly. After this disengagement, each member of the assembly can be individually manually withdrawn.

The structural difference between Applicants' design and the references goes to the heart of their functional

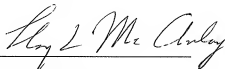
difference; the references being guide wires and rails and Applicants' design employing an engagement member.

Having both ends of the linear engagement member embedded in the sidewall of the members 20, 22 of the assembly means that the only utility of the engagement member is to permit disengaging the two members so they can be individually removed from the patient after the procedure is terminated.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that all of the claims in this case are in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1529.

Respectfully submitted,



Dated: 11 Jan 2007

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